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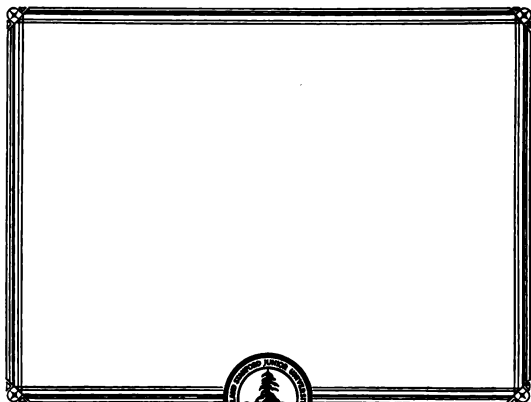
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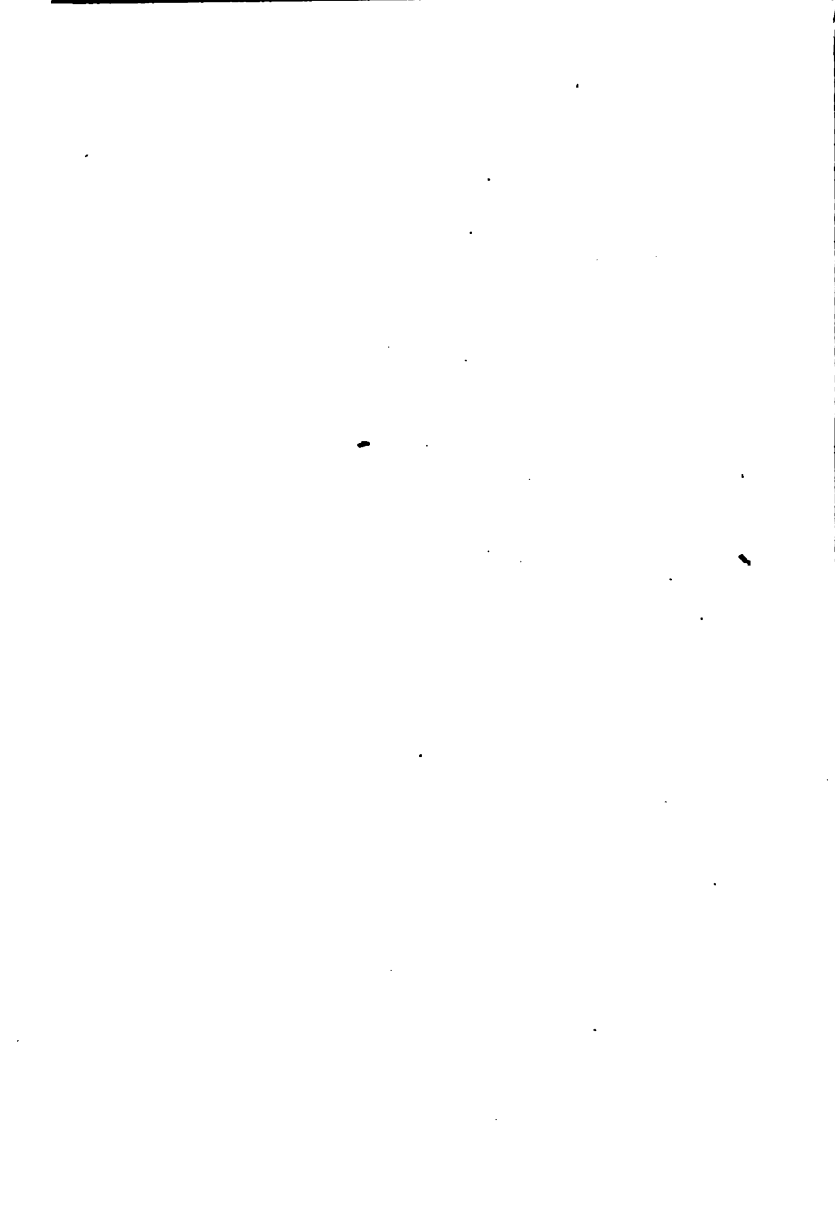


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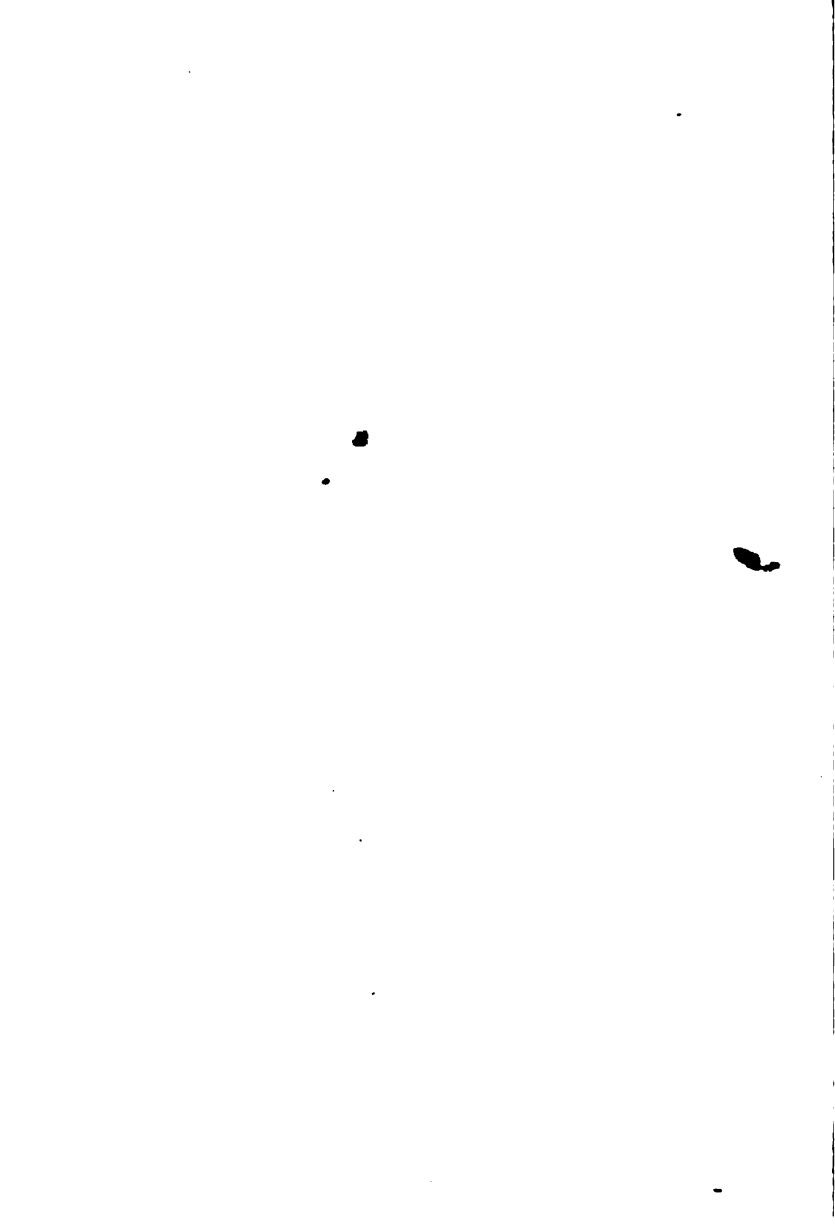


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I.

The hand of the Lord . . . set me down in the midst of a plain that was full of bones. Now they were very many upon the face of the plain, and they were exceeding dry. And he said to me : Son of man, dost thou think these bones shall live? . . . Prophecy concerning these bones : and say to them : Ye dry bones, . . . behold, I will send spirit into you, and you shall live. (*Ezekiel xxxvii. 1-5.*)

THE writers of this little book have both had long and wide experience in pacing the educational plain of teaching and training to teach, and the one thing that has more than others impressed itself

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upon them is the abysmal difference between teacher and teacher, lesson and lesson. That difference is not a question of talent, of endowment, of preparation ; these things may be equal. It is simply the difference between Life and its absence. In the hands of A, a lesson lives—that is, it germinates, throws off unexpected shoots and suckers, fructifies, grows *power* ; in the hands of B, one and the same lesson, prepared as carefully and fully, delivered on the same lines, is *dead*, it ends with itself ; it may be a neat, a satisfactory thing, it is not a satisfying thing.

These papers, then, are meant to concern themselves solely with what makes for living teaching and education ; they pre-suppose that the teacher possesses the

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needful scholarship, and begin only with its impartment. And if some warrant is needed for saying things confessedly obvious and in a quite true sense commonplace, the Two can only reply that they have found that the obvious is often passed by unnoted, and that the commonest things are not seldom theme for "enduring astonishment".

If into any teachers, and especially the danger-beset trained teachers, this little book be the means of "sending spirit," it will be worth while to have written it.

II. OF CHARM.

Some minds, romantically dull, despise physical endowments. (*Virginibus Puerisque.*)

MUCH time and thought are nowadays expended on the embellishment and adornment of the school class-room. And it is surely quite fitting that the general tone of the rooms in which children are to live for a number of hours each day should be bright, and cheerful, and pleasing, that the walls should be delicately tinted, that plants and flowers and pictures should abound. We do well thus to charm the eyes of the young, with intent that

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other and better things shall follow from the charm — Happiness, Cultivated Taste, Pleasure in the Beautiful.

But a professional eye turns with eagerness from these largely passive agents, and looks to the one who here holds sway, hoping to find a personality also endowed with the power of charm, to see one who is consciously and skilfully using all natural endowments as a means of fascinating the minds and bodies of the children who are here to be educated and trained.

Too often the main instruments of such charm lie neglected, or are positively misused, and the pity of this is great. The power of facial expression, for instance, often is telling wholly in the wrong direction. It may be that the face be-

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trays too great a consciousness of responsibility, a worried look, or possibly a look of grim determination to keep order among these children at whatever cost. This is not only not charming, it is fruitless. It is from one's purpose, either of work to be accomplished or order to be maintained.

Again, it is not uncommon to find the face betraying irritation, discontent, or suffering of some kind. This should not be. If the cause of the irritation or the suffering is personal and lies outside the class-room, then surely the irritation and the suffering should also stay outside. This means a great generosity and an initial bravery ; but in proportion to the intensity of one's suffering should be the will with which one refrains from

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allowing it, or even the reflection of it, to touch others.

And least of all should it touch the children. Let not "grief of ours the season wrong".

If the cause lies with the errors and ways of the children themselves, let us take care that the indignation be not a personal pique resulting in an expression of peevishness and irritation, but a righteous wrath which is wholly impersonal. In the former are vindictiveness and ill-temper, in the latter is charm.

Two things, we think, may safely, and justly, and profitably be reflected on the countenance—Joy and Life. Both are charm. But in order to reflect them it is necessary to be

Heart-whole and soul-free.

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Joy and Life should play over the face. There is nothing so productive of depression and weariness and melancholy as the sitting for hours before a heavy, immovable face ; a face lit up by no smile, having eyes that never strike light, lips that never quiver with emotion. Why have a dead face? Why not live, and joy in living? That of itself will accomplish more than half the work to be done in a school classroom.

And the Voice of the teacher—the main instrument of his work—is it “the voice of the Charmer . . . of the wizard that charmeth wisely?” Does he or she

Sing notes of love ; that some who hear
Far off, inert, may lend an ear,
Rise up and wonder and draw near ?

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What is the voice of the average teacher like? What is its pitch? Is it tired, throaty, thin, nasal, harsh, strident? How far does it carry? How far does it of itself compel attention? Does it improve with use? How many persons who are teaching at the present time have had any voice-training whatsoever? In what other profession is the main instrument of work so little regarded, nay, so wrongly used?

After a year or two of school life what happens to the voices of the children? Where has the bright, clear, sparkling speech of the children gone? Why do they now stand up and murmur inaudible nothings? Why cannot they, when they leave school, read an English poem with ease,

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and with pleasure to themselves and to their hearers?

Teachers can hardly attach too much importance to the training of voice, which, both in their own interests and those of the pupils, must needs be "an excellent thing," be they man or woman. And we think that the teacher whose voice is thus attuned will less easily yield to that common temptation of perpetual talk, being mindful that "there is music also in a rest". When Mozart was once asked what produced most music he is said to have answered, "No Music". That is an illuminating consideration for many class teachers: it is pitiable to see a class of children sitting dumb, with eyes half-dazed with misery and fatigue, listlessly wait-

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ing until the chatter of an ill-attuned voice shall cease.

And Movement? Grace of movement on the part of the children, movement at once healthy natural, respectful, courteous, is begotten of a like movement on the part of the teacher. And the utilitarian, with much work before him and not intent on the graces, may rest assured that the cultivation of charm in movement will win an effect in his work which is not to be despised. It is no slight thing, from the point of view of discipline alone, to be able to stand easily and firmly without the support of a blackboard, to sit without cradling the face in the hands, to walk with a clean-cut, well-defined step, in fine, to make no movement that is not purposed and

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under control. Very soon would vanish the stooping shoulders, the half-lazy, half-inert attitudes not too uncommon among the children. Robert Louis Stevenson has said: "For my part I can see few things more desirable, after the possession of such radical qualities as honour and humour and pathos, than to have a lively and not a stolid countenance; to have looks to correspond with every feeling; to be elegant and delightful in person, so that we shall please even in the intervals of active pleasing, and may never discredit speech with uncouth manners, or become unconsciously our own burlesques". This might have been written especially for teachers. They ought indeed to have much of charm; and the

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charm is not an artificial nothing ;
it is a power which will lighten
and brighten the lives of all within
the class-room ; and its source is
Love—love for the children, love
for the work, love for the Profes-
sion.

Love is the glory which makes
Song of the poet divine,
Love is the fountain of Charm. .

III.

The Readiness is all. (*Hamlet*, v. 2.)

IN all teaching, in every class-lesson given, there is, of course, a necessary and most valuable element of Preparedness ; and it is one of the results, as it is part of the business, of Training to impress this. Yet it is quite evident that the very completeness of preparation may prove a snare—may lead to grooviness, to over-delight in systematisation, to going through a lesson rather than to teaching the children—briefly, to dead work.

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This sort of "readiness," then, though much, is not all. For quite as truly does teaching require some measure of unpreparedness. Not that one advises extempore lessons—at least, not as a general thing. Sometimes, indeed, in the rare but real moments of conscious inspiration, the extempore lesson in the hands of the powerful and, above all, the full teacher will be the most effective and stimulating thing. Only very occasionally, however ; and best in certain subjects—literature, for instance.

But we are speaking rather of that ability to deal fruitfully with all that inevitably crops up in the course of the lesson. For no lesson can be completely prepared. Always there will arise, happily for us, the unforeseen, the unex-

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pected—certainly on the side of the children, most desirably also on the side of the teacher.

Now it is just these then-and-there occurrences which are the class teacher's opportunities: a child's answer, a child's question, frequently a child's blunder, some trivial occurrence during the course of the lesson, any and all of these things, seized and traded with, give life and movement to the lesson just because they enlist the children as co-operators in the teaching. For in all teaching there are three factors—the Lesson, the Teacher, the Taught; and the first must go from the second to the third. But the important, the vital thing is, that these three are one, and one at every moment of the lesson. It is not that the

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teacher throws the ball, direct and true, and the children catch it without miss, "and there an end". The ball must be kept going throughout, and both ends play the game. Nor is it the part of teacher to throw and of class to catch ; the class also throws, and pity is it if the teacher fail to catch or is not nimble enough to jump aside and meet the swerving ball and send it back into the direct line of play ; he plays a dead game.

To drop metaphor. We are not talking only of the ability to deal with any awkward question interposed by a child in the midst of an explanation ; this may be merely an affair of knowledge. Nor do we mean the healthy digression, the gay side-excursion into fields

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suggested by this or that point, though these, if they do not carry too far from the high road, nor too long retard the main journey, are good. But we speak of the faculty of *immediate seizure* of opportunities born of the moment, and the power to press them into service for the aim in view.

Any teacher, any one who has watched teachers at work, knows what we mean. A little spark thrown out haphazard by some child is suffered by one to go out in darkness, by another is caught and blown to a flame.

Again, independently of this "suggestion" by the class, the living teacher is bound to experience spontaneous suggestion, to feel things "come into her head,"—device or thought that shall

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simplify matters for the puzzled, or stimulate the lagging, or catch the interest of the slumbrous. One teacher brings her store of "Illustrations," and uses them faithfully and pertinently ; so too the other, but to her much also that she did not bring, but which brought itself, is illustration—some coming pleasure, some visit, some chance occurrence, some object furnishing happy comparison.

All this implies much. Is it a gift? Partly, of course, yes ; merely gift, no. Much can be acquired.

And, first, it means Fulness ; for happy thoughts will not suddenly fly out of the empty or meagrely stocked mind, nor will any amount of potential suggestion on the part of the pupils strike fire if it meet

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with nought to strike. And clearly mere reading does not necessarily make for fulness, though of course it has something to do with it. But the essential thing is a Habit of Observation, and, if we may so say, of Storage. We have most of us known people with the small-article-collecting mania, people who hoard up all manner of things on the ground that they may "come in useful"—bits of string, pins, old nails, half sheets of paper, and what not. Of disputable value in this material form, the habit is, in the mental order, entirely excellent; the storing up, for future service, of incident, quotation, anecdote, joke.

"Keep but ever looking," says Schramm in *Pippa Passes*, "whether with the body's eye or

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the mind's, and you will soon find something to look on !”

Next we want Alertness of mind to utilise the hoarded gains, to bring forth from the treasure-house things new or old as occasion requires. Also it is evident that this very alertness supposes the all-important Ability to Penetrate the Child-Mind, to see in the apparently irrelevant answer either its partial truth or the misapprehension which caused its falsity.

And, finally, need we say that there is wanted a Sense of Humour, without which a hundred golden chances must inevitably be missed, and with them, much joyousness? But of this little, for it cannot be acquired. The first and second factors can, and the third,

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point was, we should never have thought of it. But, had there been no scissors, that student would have gained her purpose equally by something else—an ink-bottle, perhaps, or a chalk-duster. The readiness was all.

IV.

O ye Wheels . . . stop, be silent for to-day! (*The Cry of the Children.*)

LIFE expresses itself in movement; yet not all movement is evidence of life. Life-movement is from within, though quickened and sustained from without; movement that is generated from without, worked wholly from without, which stops and begins again solely in response to external influence, is not living but automatic; its spring is not Life but Mechanism.

Now it is easily possible not only that Mechanism shall be sub-

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stituted for Life in a class or a school, but that it shall be mistaken for it; that the very perfection of the machinery shall be a source of blinding satisfaction to those at the head of affairs, so that "having the name of being alive" they "know not that" they "are dead".

Easily possible. For this condition of things is born, on the one hand, from the very necessity of system and order in corporate government, on the other, from personal position. There is doubtless always some degree of satisfaction in holding any post of authority, and that of master or mistress of a class often carries with it much content. The danger is that, in some minds, there shall be begotten of this content in authority an unbounded self-con-

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fidence, "as who should say 'I am Sir Oracle, and when I ope my mouth let no dog bark,'" a self-confidence which, in the secret heart, does in fact say with decision and pleasure : "I, and I only, understand what can be done within this room and the method to be employed in doing it, and—I do it".

Alas ! the doing is so systematic and uniform that there is a yearly output from that class-room of duly hall-marked children. And always, mind you, the same mark. No matter what the material, the workman is the same, the machinery of method is the same—why, the supreme joy of the worker is to see his machinery working without hitch—and, therefore, there is no variety in the

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final product. To any measure proposed from outside comes the invariable response : " Yes, that is all very well, but *I* always do so-and-so." All is said.

This type of workman is often quite eager to attend professional discussions. One is momentarily deceived into believing that he is no mere machinist, but a spirit open to new ideas. But his contribution to the debate reveals him. " Oh, yes, it may be good to begin History with Biography ; but *I* begin with Pre-historic Man ; my children always like it". And so he flings his dead-weight of fixed method and self-satisfaction on any spark of life that may be struck by his colleagues. In other words, he *refuses to renew himself*.

He is content with his own

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system of ruling as of teaching, and when a question of control or discipline arises within the little kingdom of his class-room he invariably reproves or manages this fault in this way and that in another, with no discrimination between offender and offender, and, therefore, without that living sympathy which so modifies the trainer and his method as to meet justly and efficaciously the particular case in hand.

The atmosphere of the class, the tone of the class, never varies from year to year. Slow children, quick children, naughty children, good children, sulky children, amiable children, all are turned into the mill, and pressed and pulled and cracked and, it may be, broken, until they exhibit a uniform conduct.

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And not conduct only is disciplined thus. The knowledge also which has to be imparted is prepared with a thoroughness which is its finality. This is poured out with a contented delivery, or dragged out from the class in the form already pre-conceived in the mind of the teacher. To an original or independent and delightfully surprising answer from A comes the calm reply, "I do not want that," and later, joyfully, to Z, "Yes, that is what I want". And life dies daily, and the teacher knows it not.

So, too, the correction of exercises is conducted from the same one-sided point of view, that of the operator. We verily believe that he experiences great content when confronted with a pile of

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exercise-books. What is right therein is noted with self-gratulatory joy; also what is wrong—not, indeed, with a view to utilising it for gain or development of the blunderers, but in sheer satisfaction at being right while some one else is wrong, and at the near possibility of putting some unfortunate child through the correction-machine department.

All the machinery, as a rule, works silently and works always. Hence precisely arises the content in this false atmosphere of order, and the belief that the eternity of motion begets true life. “Rules are leading strings,” writes Bishop Spalding, “for those whose mind’s eye is dead. Let them but open it and they will see the truth which in the rule is

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dead." But these are satisfied to see the millstones go round and round, never thinking to look for the white fall of wholesome flour which would show that the corn is being ground.

One longs indeed in school-rooms of this type for some hobgoblin or mischievous fairy to alight on a cog-wheel and stop this life-killing process; for a Puck with his love- or life-juice—(for it comes to the same thing)—to instil something of the notion that "each one's educational influence is measured by the knowledge and culture which he has made his own; and since knowledge and culture are vital and genuine in those alone who strive seriously and with perseverance to improve themselves, it follows

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that only they are true educators who are all the while busy up-building their own being by increasing their power of knowing and doing, by deepening and purifying their power of hoping, and believing, and loving."

The material for this work is life itself—not one life, but many lives, each with its own peculiar wealth of gifts and graces; lives not to be broken, or crushed, or enfeebled, but to be protected, utilised, made strong and full. Here is the material with which one will best upbuild his own being and purify his own power; not moulding the lives all to his own pattern, but rather aiming at the producing of individual vigour and activity of body, mind and soul. To quote Bishop

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Spalding once more : " Men of genius never cease to strive, because they are guided and ruled by an ideal of perfection to which, however great their gifts or their performance, they never attain. They feel that they may yet do better things, and hope and confidence keep them fresh and young. They *become* and find themselves in their work. They grow with it and rise with it toward the truth and beauty of which it is the symbol and expression. Though every teacher cannot have genius, every real educator works in this spirit."

V.

Dry Bones and the Spirit.

HITHERTO, save for an occasional illustration, we have dealt with the conditions of living teaching mainly from the theoretic side. It remains to infuse into these abstract remarks the Humour, or it may be the Pathos, of the classroom. The experiences are in all cases genuine and first hand.

In this matter of vitality it is obvious that the Art of Questioning, occasionally somewhat sneered at by the "Practical" educationist, is of paramount

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importance. For if life is to be awakened, and sustained, and enriched in the course of teaching, it will be so mainly by the instrumentality of questions.

It chanced, then, on a day, that Life and No-Life prepared a lesson on Tennyson's lyric, "Break, break, break." Now their Notes were sensible and much on the same lines; each took as her first Step to show that this poem is neither Descriptive nor Narrative, but Emotional, the classes having already studied poems of the two former kinds.

So No-Life stood before her class, and, having read the verses, asked simply and, as it seems to us, entirely wisely, what the poem was about. And three children stood up to answer.

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The first said :—

“ It is about the sea.”

And No-Life looked disgusted,
and said :—

“ *About* the sea ! Not at all.”

And the second said :—

“ It tells you about somebody,
who is dead.”

To which No-Life made re-
ply :—

“ That would make it a Nar-
rative poem ; and it doesn't *tell*
at all.”

And the third said :—

“ The poet feels sad.”

And No-Life answered with
only half-satisfied inflection :—

“ Well, ye-es ; but we don't
want the poet's feelings, but
whose ? ”

“ Ours,” chorused the children,
following lead.

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“ So it is a poem of—— ? ”

“ Feeling.”

And they all chronicled in their note-books that “ Break, break, break ” is (*a*) not Descriptive, (*b*) not Narrative, but (*c*) is Emotional.

And No-Life was happy.

Then she went on to ask what sights and sounds were mentioned, and having obtained for the former, “ fisherman’s boy, his sister, sailor lad, stately ships ” and, for the latter, “ shouts and song,” these things also were noted numerically, under the separate headings (*a*) *Sights*, (*b*) *Sounds*, the whole being entered as *Analysis of Poem*. She then asked :—

“ What kind of sounds are shouting and singing ? ”

“ Joyful,” said the children.

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"And what kind of feelings had the poet?"

"Sad," said the children.

"Are these things like or different then?"

"Different," said the children.

"And what do we call a strong difference between two things?"

"A contrast," said the unerring children.

"So what Artistic Principle does Tennyson make use of in this poem?"

"Contrast."

Similarly, by working out that the dead friend was not in so many words mentioned, a second principle, "Suggestion," was obtained, and these things, too, went down into the note-books. And No-Life thought that it was good.

But Life, standing before her

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class, also read the poem aloud, and then asked the self-same opening question. And, the minds of children being much the same everywhere, she got the same three answers. But she, instead of taking up each in turn, waited till the third had been given, and then said : "One thinks it is about the sea, and one thinks it is about some one who is dead, and one thinks it is about the poet's sadness. Well! you are all of you right. But now tell me which the poet meant us chiefly to think about—the sea or the dead person." And the children at once said, "The dead person". "But does he say in so many words that he has lost a friend? No, he only hints or suggests it." And then, leading them gently

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through the poem, she made them see the Relation of the seascape described and of all its Details to this underlying emotion of grief. Then she too asked what sounds fell upon the poet's ears, and she too obtained that the sounds were joyful ones. And she said :—

“Now, does not that seem a little out of keeping with the general feeling of the poem? Would it not have been better to have put in only mournful sounds—the moaning of the wind, perhaps, or the cry of a hurt child?”

But the children saw that the thing was sadder so, sadder just because of the jar.

Then Life, though her lesson was on “Break, break, break,” by Tennyson, feared not to

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spend time reading "The Three Fishers," by Kingsley, the children listening the while for a similar contrast ; and, as she finished, not a child but called out

*Three corpses lay out on the shining
sands,
In the morning gleam, as the tide
went down.*

Of all this, what was entered in the note-books? I rather think nothing ; but the children's eyes had been opened to see beyond that particular poem, and, for the sheer pleasure of it, they read "Crossing the Bar" to themselves out of school hours. Which made Life absurdly happy when they told her.

In that same lesson both Life and No-Life took up the question of Metre. Both very properly

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asked the children to scan one or two lines, and thus led them to discover that in all the lines there are three accents.

Then No-Life proceeded :—

“How many unaccented syllables in the first foot of the second line?”

“Three.”

“And in the second?”

“Two.”

Which having shown to be the case in other lines also, she said :—

“Then, if the number of syllables to the foot varies, what shall we say about the Metre?”

“That it is Irregular.”

And this fact went into the notebooks, as also, educed by similar questioning, the second dead fact that the absence of *all* unaccented

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syllables in the opening line made its feet *Monosyllabic*.

Life, too, drew attention to the constant number of beats and the varying number of syllables, but she said no word of Monosyllabic Feet, only, reading the verse with the feel of the thing in her heart and voice, she asked : " Can you see *why* that line is made up of single, accented syllables? "

And all the children saw, and felt, that the very mechanism of the line conveyed the heavy impact of the wave, and Life read to them also " The Loss of the *Royal George* " that they might feel

The single pang of the blow in all the
bounds of the bell,

similarly given by the opening
foot.

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The class registered no metrical notes ; but we saw in the margin of one child's book, "*This is like the bang of a big wave,*" and we were inclined to think this the more valuable jotting. Life, at all events, when *she* saw it, gave a pleased smile.

Wherein, in all this, lay the difference? The questioning of No-Life *dissected* the poem, a treatment which is bound to produce death, even if it does not, as it usually does, presuppose it. The thing was dismembered, cut up, and the children never saw it as a whole. But Life kept the heart of it palpitating throughout, and, though she looked into its parts, never detached them.

Again, we have seen Life give a little composition lesson to a low

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form, working out a simple paragraph from the skeleton sentence, "It was a beautiful winter's day". Now the completed paragraph stood as follows :—

"It was a beautiful day in December. Every branch and twig of the bare trees, every leaf of the holly and ivy, was edged with frost that sparkled like diamonds in the bright sunlight. The air was crisp and clear. The little rippling brook was still, for it was quite frozen over."

Life took up the last sentence, and drew from the children that the frost, as it were, held the waters imprisoned ; and she asked them to try, with this thought in their heads, to alter the sentence, speaking of the Frost as if it were a person. One little girl rose to

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volunteer "The *Frost-Policeman* had laid strong hands upon the brook and imprisoned its waves in crystal". And Life smiled a beaming smile—not, mind you, for the fun of the thing—not a child in the class, by the way, saw anything funny—but in sheer joy of her teacher's heart. She said: "You have quite the right idea; but just listen how it sounds," and she read the paragraph aloud from the beginning, with the new sentence inserted. No sooner had the words "Frost-Policeman" passed her lips than the whole class burst into a ripple of laughter.

"Ah!" said Life, "why do you laugh?"

"Because you see the big, ugly policeman standing up in the middle," cried the original

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authoress, and she changed it to "the Frost-King". Then Life read the paragraph aloud a second time, and the children all nodded approval. They had *felt* the difference between the harmonious and the inharmonious : that was vital gain, and permanent.

It chances at other times that pupils give answers which, without their meaning it, are virtual criticisms on the questions. No-Life and Life receive these with different feelings.

The former asked a class of little ones what colour Ice is.

"No colour," in a chorus.

"Oh, yes, it is. What colour is Snow?"

"White," promptly.

"Well, then, what colour is Ice?"

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And after a little more of it the weary children assented, unconvinced.

Now Life might also have called Ice white, but would have seen the force of the little ones' refusal so to call it, and been grateful for the implied criticism born of their more accurately discriminative perceptions.

In the old days of so-called Object Lessons on animals, we have heard Life, in the midst of a lesson on the Elephant to a class of small boys, prepare to relate the well-worn story of the tailor and that beast. She had no sooner begun, "There was once a tailor," than the entire class sang out with brutal frankness, "We know that story".

No-Life would have said :—

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"You rude boys ! Listen."

But Life smiled and said :—

"All right ! Listen well, and if I make any slip just hold up your hands."

The anecdote proceeded.

"Then the tailor took up a pin and pricked . . . "

All hands shot up with a simultaneous shout and laugh :—

"Wrong ! It was a needle."

Life laughed too ; and laughter is a vital thing.

Indeed, apart from any latent educational possibilities in a child's happy answers, it strikes us often that there is Joy to be had out of them. This joy No-Life misses.

The following is an extreme instance, but *bonâ-fide*. No-Life, in a lesson on King Arthur, having told of his Knights and his

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Round Table, asked—to what purpose doth not appear—

“Where did he sit?”

A child replied :—

“In a hole in the middle.”

And No-Life was astonished—and vexed. She should have been neither, or, if astonished, only with the joyous wonder of a new revelation of the child-mind, which, seeing that, as King, he ought to have the place of honour, and that at a round table there could be none, thus solved the difficulty by this stroke of genius. Of course No-Life may have laughed and told the story up and down to her friends; but merely as a joke, not out of the professional joy of which we are speaking. Thus joyously to receive these “buone fortune” of the teacher is

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vitalising to her ; to receive them with indifference is, at best, sterile ; to receive them with annoyance, because they were not what she wanted, is sterilising both for teacher and taught.

So far we have spoken of speech—of Question, that is, and of Answer—as the manifestation of life and the means of life-giving. But there is a silence which is no less vital and vivifying. We have often been distressed, in watching the teaching of Mathematics, to hear the ceaseless stream of questions from the lips of No-life—designed, indeed, to lead and help, but filling the atmosphere with a ceaseless “ whirr,” which made the working of the mind impossible. While in the class taught by Life would be pauses, and long silences,

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and an atmosphere still and tense. With death? Nay, with life—the life of strenuous, concentrated, personal thought.

Another thing that surely kills the life out of a lesson is the Want of Proportion, of Balance, the lack of a due Sense of Values, which results in giving equal development and importance to every part. It is very common, and proceeds sometimes from a mistaken principle of Exhaustive Treatment. In certain subjects, notably, we think, History and Geography, it is eminently fatal. Every reign, every period, every personage, is treated with equal fulness or meagreness; and the class, thus baulked of all perspective and all light and shade, fails utterly to grasp *wholes*; fails

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utterly to concentrate its vision on the great movements that shook a nation or a continent, or to see how these were gradually but inevitably led up to by many lesser things ; fails utterly to become intimate with the great figures, good or bad, which, a head and shoulders taller than the brethren, have made the history of the age in which they lived and of many after ; fails utterly, therefore, to feel the *life* of History.

And what is true of a whole subject is true also of a single lesson. We have, for example, listened to a first lesson on the Centigrade Thermometer, in which the teacher, misled by the Fallacy of Completeness, gave the full explanation of how tube and bulb are filled with quick-

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silver, thereby quite withdrawing the mental vision from that on which it should have been focussed throughout, namely, the Principle of Construction.

Finally, there is the question of Correction of exercises—retrospective only and barren in the hands of one, prospective and fruitful in the hands of the other.

To No-Life the idea is that books have to be corrected and marked, both which things she conscientiously does. But beyond that awarded mark she looks not ; she considers not the effect of her correction on the child's mind, its bearing on future work. Generally, we have observed, her correction takes one of two forms : either she crosses out the wrong and puts in the

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right, or she writes in the margin exclamatory and vituperatory remarks, as "Oh, Hannah! This is disgraceful;" or merely, "Oh, Hannah!" Neither of these methods attains to Hannah at all; they touch merely the written page and with it end.

Both, in fact, are, in different ways, final, whereas it is the essence of living correction, which is but a part of living teaching, to stimulate, to suggest, to set upon the road, but not to lead to the end of it. The real corrector should be the pupil, not the teacher. No-Life, working on the dead exercise-book instead of on the living child, neither varies nor discriminates in her correction; let a child, say, spell *paraffin* with one *f*, and *accommodate* with

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one *c*, she in each case inserts the missing letters. But Life put in the *f*, but against the second word merely wrote "ask," and, when the child came to her, explained the structure of the word and the assimilation of the *d* in the prefix. For No-Life a mistake is a mistake; for Life, there are mistakes of Carelessness, and mistakes of Blameless Ignorance, and mistakes of Culpable Ignorance, and mistakes of Unintelligence and Want of Thought; and with all these she deals differently.

Observe, again, that even the exclamatory form of correction, if sparsely used, need not be barren or final, and "Oh, Hannah!" from the pen of Life has been known to fill that young person with wholesome shame, and to be to

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her the beginning of better things. For the " Oh ! " was instinct with the disappointment of her teacher, and the " Hannah " seemed equivalent to *Noblesse oblige*.

VI.

Have I commandment on the pulse of life? (*King John*, iv. 2.)

THERE is a Life in every school which is felt rather than seen or heard. It is that life which constitutes the Soul of a school. It is not any person, or movement, or incident, and yet it is all of these. Its character, its tone or fibre, differs in different schools. The beats of its pulsation may be strong and regular or weak and fluttering, and will evidence accordingly health or sickness.

And we think that often the existence of this life is ignored,

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with the result that it is enfeebled ; or it may be that individual teachers, in their exclusive devotion to and interest in their own particular class, " pull jealous," to the detriment, naturally, of this broader school life, which in turn then exercises a less powerful influence on the individual.

This Life is probably born of some chief governor in the school. Coming in a strong, full tide, it may make itself felt immediately ; or it may permeate more gently and slowly but none the less surely. In any case it is a life which ought to grow and strengthen from year to year and from generation to generation, feeding itself on school traditions, and depending for its existence on each and every life in the school. Begotten of person-

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alities and sustained by these, this life becomes finally, or ought so to become, greater than any personality ; much too great and strong to be killed by any single individual or incident ; much too noble and precious a thing to be wantonly neglected or injured. No one ought to live in the school and not contribute to its vigour ; no one so contributing can leave the school without being the richer for their contribution.

And although in each school the Life will exhibit a *cachet* all its own, one would like it, nevertheless, to be in every case compact of many things—the spirits of Truth, Honour, Reverence, Courtesy and Work. A Reverence and Courtesy which are reciprocal between the staff and the

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children, and which are manifested by them on all appropriate occasions. Courtesy displayed not so much by the school as a whole acting in unison and may be under compulsion, as by the voluntary never-failing spirit and act of the individual.

An evidence of true vitality in the spirit of Work would be the unanimous disapproval of a work-shirker, this leading ultimately to an atmosphere in which the thought of shirking work could occur to none but a new-comer.

And so there ought to grow up a Life which can be regarded as an Ideal, which, in fact, is an ideal. It is something which belongs to all, and more especially to those who have contributed to its being. Not every person can give in the

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same measure. The innate Honour of one shall strengthen the general sense of honour, and the serious Work of another shall strengthen the right spirit of work, and so on.

The righting of individual failings, too, is no small stimulus to healthy life. Each one, teacher or pupil, will contribute what he can, and in return will inherit a strength which is not for school-days only but for all time; a strength which shall enable him to live more fully and strongly, more deeply, happily and nobly.

But it is necessary that each be explicitly aware of the existence of this Life. It must be ever before the minds of all who train in the school, and put by them before the eyes of the children as a tang-

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ible, all-important thing. The work of fostering the Life must be recognised as a duty. It is, indeed, perhaps the most fundamental duty. A passive attitude, particularly in a trainer of the young, is not merely negative, it is actively pernicious.

It is customary to emphasise the development of this school life in the Upper Forms, and more especially in the matter of School Games. But the limitation is obviously unwise ; the frank, clear-sighted, bare judgments of young children are extremely valuable. Their bright enthusiasm and their great content in good work for its own sake are precisely the material which the trainer most wants in this respect.

Once firmly and healthily rooted,

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this Life becomes the basis of Authority and true Discipline ; for all within the school should live in harmony with it. Any note of discord should at once be righted by public opinion, and it is the business of each to strengthen public opinion on the side of right, thus pulsing intenser vigour into the Life of the school. Right conduct will then be forthcoming not so much through fear or love of any one person, but as compelled by this corporate Life. So strongly compelled, indeed, that, in the absence of masters or mistresses, right conduct would prevail, not for a brief space only and not merely from a possible novelty in the situation ; of this latter the children would soon tire ; the real thing being something they love.

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So far we have spoken of the necessity of recognising and consciously feeding the Life, and of its power when in full health. But the Life may be diseased ; its circulation may be feeble, or its pulse full yet indicative of fever. And the chief danger lies in the fact that the inmates of the school may not be aware of their ill condition, know not the symptoms of disease ; for the health or sickness is not always to be gauged by rule. A stranger can often best lay his hand on or scent the evil. A child standing outside his classroom door during the term of a whole lesson or even longer (!) ; an inquiry addressed to child or teacher answered brusquely and with a "who-are-you?" stare ; a muttered criticism of the Head's

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action here or another teacher's there ; the voice of one clamouring for and demanding discipline ; the lack of interest in the success of any member of the school ; the discontented look here—the same repeated there ;—a brief space suffices to betray the disease. One turns away with a huge pity for all within the building—for those, on the one hand, who lack the gift of insight or are acting with mistaken zeal ; on the other hand, for those who, owing to the conditions which obtain, will leave the school poor where they might have been rich, feeble where they might have been strong. And although we have insisted that it is the duty of all to support a robust Life, yet more especially will its tone depend on the personal

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vigour and uprightness and skill of the Head, on his or her power of obtaining what is best from others, of inspiring them with a right and bright and cheerful zest for work.

The Head is the chief Sower, and as he sows so shall he, and all, reap.

VII.

AND now, in conclusion, it must be conceded that, however fascinating the teachers, and however skilled, however perfect the lesson-giving, however satisfactory the tone of the school, there is in the profession much physical fatigue, much mental strain, much—we boldly write the word—Drudgery. These must be bravely faced. To help the facing, and also much to reduce them, we would leave to you one counsel, simple almost to truism, but helpful exceedingly if you will make it your own. “Live.

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the Life"—do not merely go through it, or take it on and off.

"Things looked at patiently from one side after another," says R. L. Stevenson, "generally end by showing a side that is beautiful." But we mean much more than a love borne of patient study and reflection. *Live* the life,—that is, enter into it fully, and let it enter you ; let it, so to say, *be* you. Do not, as some do, look on the time before and after school hours as your real life and the other only as an excrescence of toil upon it.

Live *all* the life—the administration and organisation as well as the teaching, the games no less than the lessons. Live it in all its details. And if you cannot indeed actively participate in all, in all at least be interested, and

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show your interest. Be part and parcel of the corporate life of the place.

Live the life—heartily, strenuously, full-bloodedly. Be alert and keen to extract interest, and, therefore, profit and joy, from everything—from the sayings and doings of the children, from their blunders, from the methods and devices of your colleagues, from all circumstances, and incidents, and surroundings.

Believe that this is possible. You can train yourselves to it, and if you do so you will keep yourselves eternally fresh of face and young of heart.

ST. MARY'S HALL,
MOUNT PLEASANT,
LIVERPOOL.

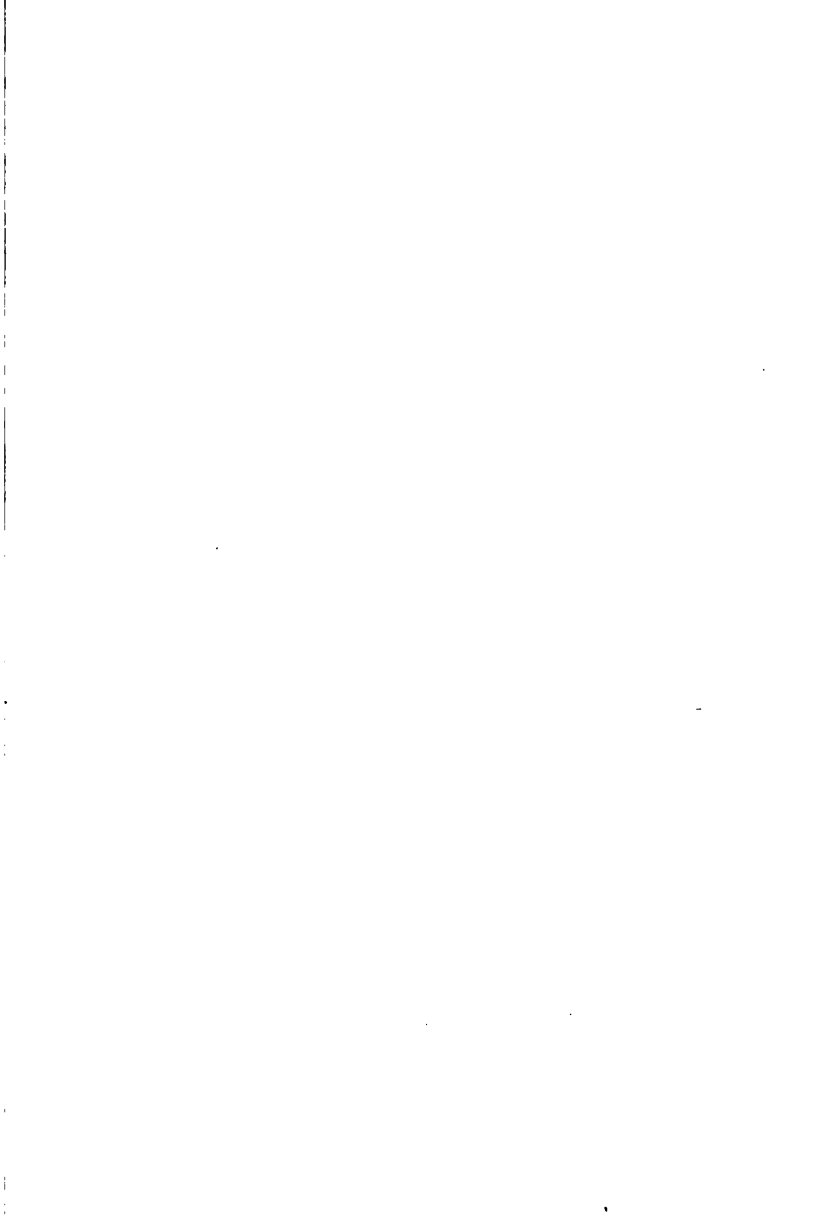
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